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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

TAB C

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Science and Technology Advisory Panel (STAP)

82-2636

FROM:

Director, IC Staff
BW09 CHB

EXTENSION

NO.

DCI/ICS 82-3012

DATE

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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DDS&T

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DDCI

will see copy tonight

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DCI

DCI:

DDCI may have some comments on this tomorrow AM.

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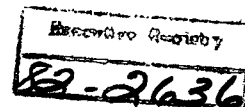
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DCI/ICS 82-3012

11 March 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM:
Director, Intelligence Community Staff

STAT

SUBJECT: Science and Technology Advisory Panel (STAP)

1. Some weeks ago you asked for my evaluation of the STAP, the support for which was recently transferred to the IC Staff, and recommendations for improving its responsiveness and effectiveness. Members of my staff and I have had a number of conversations with those who know STAP's work, past and present members, and others who support similar boards and committees. I have also discussed this memorandum and these proposals with Les Dirks, who agrees with the assessment and would like to associate himself with the recommendations.

2. One significant problem seems to be that STAP is generally perceived as not being well-connected to the relevant substance of the issues it addresses. Some accuse it of superficiality. Members receive briefings on complex subjects but have too little time to devote to deep investigations of these issues. STAP considers itself an advisory body to the DCI; thus, in the last analysis, you and Bobby are the only ones who can evaluate whether the advice you receive is pertinent and helpful. No matter how useful the STAP's evaluations, however, you cannot be responsible for managing and monitoring its activities and following up on its recommendations. What is needed is a structure that does not now exist to channel STAP's activities into areas of greatest concern to you and Bobby where STAP can have a positive impact.

3. In addition to improving the effectiveness of STAP by more careful management, the following recommendations also address what I have discovered is the fundamental problem with panels of this kind and particularly with STAP--the lack of follow-through and feedback. This can be particularly frustrating to STAP members, but it also affects those in the Community responsible for activities that STAP has addressed. Too often, STAP recommendations are general and difficult to act on. Specific recommendations, even if they are not accepted, are easier for you and others advising you to address. Specific recommendations also facilitate providing feedback. It is easier to tell the STAP what was implemented and how their recommendations have affected operations or, conversely, why a suggestion was not accepted and why not. If feedback is provided in a constructive way, it should increase the likelihood that future recommendations will take better account of your personal management style.

4. In formulating the following recommendations for changes in STAP's operation, we have borrowed ideas that seem to make similar boards and councils more effective. Obviously, it will be necessary to test any suggestions for a period of time before we can know whether they suit the STAP and the way you choose to use it.

o Memoranda Requesting Studies. Each STAP study should be initiated by a memorandum from you or Bobby to the Chairman requesting an assessment or recommendations. The memorandum would provide as much background as you think necessary and specific questions you would like to have addressed. In addition, it would set a reasonable deadline and provide the name of a line or staff official within the Community whom you would assign to work with the STAP. The memorandum requesting the study should establish a written dialogue with the STAP that would result in a refinement of terms of reference for the study.

o Assignment of Community Official as Working Group Member. In addition to a permanent executive secretary for the STAP*, there would be a substantively knowledgeable individual assigned to work with each sub-panel on activities that you or Bobby have requested the STAP to address. This person would work with the STAP for the duration of the specific study, usually about six months and, in any case, only part-time. Your willingness to provide high-level, substantive assistance to a STAP effort will signal to the members your commitment to seeing that they produce a useable product. An insider, working with the STAP, will also help to focus their recommendations on realistic alternatives. The ideal person for such an assignment would be someone senior, who does not necessarily have a vested interest in the outcome of the study. It could be someone with a prodding responsibility or watching brief for the subject; someone who shares your interest in seeing that a new project or existing activity gets or stays on the right track. It would be the responsibility of this person to ensure that recommendations you have approved are implemented and to provide feedback to STAP members.

o Making Recommendations Actionable. It will be the responsibility of the STAP to ensure that its recommendations are specific and capable of being acted upon. The Community official who serves with the sub-group should be able to assist the STAP members to provide realistic recommendations identifying specific actions and actors. Forcing this sort of discipline on the STAP, which up to now has been flexible and not accountable, may be difficult, but it should be worthwhile. This, too, will enhance the likelihood of follow-through and should make providing feedback considerably easier.

*There should continue to be a permanent Executive Secretary to support the STAP, organize the general meetings and work flow and assist in the management of the sub-panels.

o Outside Experts. Outsiders, who have expertise in a specific area that STAP is studying, but who are not members of STAP, should be invited to join STAP sub-panels for individual projects. These consultants would function as members of the STAP sub-panel or working group, but would not be members of STAP itself. There is already a large cleared pool of consultants who could be drawn into individual studies, others could be cleared for such a purpose. The Defense Science Board uses these adjunct members quite effectively to ensure that as much relevant expertise as possible is brought to bear on each study.

o General Meetings. STAP now meets for two days each quarter. Most of the productive work, however, is done by the sub-panels or working groups that meet between the general meetings. I think it is possible to reduce the number of general meetings to two or three per year to allow more time for busy STAP members to devote to the more productive sub-panel activities. To begin with, I would recommend semiannual general meetings with you and Bobby making an effort to attend at least a portion of the discussions.

o Membership. I think STAP members should serve five-year terms with the option for you to renew the appointment. If you agree, we can implement the change by staggering the terms so that they will not all be due for renewal in the same year.


o Coordination with Other Community Advisory Committees. At present, there is little coordination among the Community's scientific advisory groups. Both DIA and NSA have active, and from all accounts productive, advisory committees. Some linkage among the groups is maintained by members who serve on more than one committee and there is informal contact among the support officers for the various groups. However, I would like to see the permanent STAP secretary meet at least quarterly with the secretaries of the other advisory committees to discuss the status of ongoing efforts and to arrange joint activities, if that seems useful. As you know, the Chairman of STAP has been invited to join the IR&DC and the Executive Secretary of both the IR&DC and STAP sit in the same office. I think these opportunities provide useful and potentially productive coordination. As a panel with Community responsibility that reports to you, the STAP is in an ideal position to take the initiative and ensure that activities of mutual interest are known to all.

5. In my opinion, implementation of these recommendations will allow STAP to be more effective. How much you use the members will depend on whether they can be made to focus on issues that interest you and which they can affect positively.

STAT

STAT

CONCUR:


Deputy Director for Science and Technology

12 MAR 1982

Date

SUBJECT: Science and Technology Advisory Panel (STAP)

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DCI/ICS/SA-D/ICS, 11 March 1982

STAT